Religious Studies, B.A.

Religious studies is an academic discipline that looks at religious phenomena worldwide from a variety of angles in order to understand the many roles that religion plays in human life. To this end, students of religion learn to use a variety of theoretical analyses and methods. These include historical methods to understand how religions develop in time; critical literary methods to understand religious ideas; aesthetic methods to understand religious art and material culture; social-scientific methods to understand the relationship between religion, society and culture. Religious studies can also engage a variety of professional disciplines in analysis of how religion functions in economic, educational or political contexts, healthcare and scientific research, to name some examples.

Some ways of studying religion emphasize understanding religions on their own terms, other ways use comparative methods to discern differences and similarities between religions. Students of religion also study ways that people use religious resources to make meaning outside the boundaries of religious institutions and identities. Above all, the field of religious studies requires a willingness to explore different ways of interpreting human life and diligent effort to develop understanding of how religious ideas, symbols, rituals and spaces serve as resources for people in a variety of contexts as they make sense of and live out their lives in the world. Thus, religious studies provides important preparation for thinking, communicating and functioning professionally and personally in a complex, multi-dimensional world.

Courses

Because religious studies is an interdisciplinary program drawing upon many departments, some courses may have prerequisites in their home departments that must be fulfilled even though the prerequisites themselves have no bearing on progress within the religious studies major. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all the prerequisites to enter a course before they enroll in it. The current list of courses can be found in the Religious Studies course list page (http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/relig_st) in the Guide.

How to Get In

Students who wish to declare their intention to major or earn a certificate in religious studies must meet with the undergraduate advisor during regular office hours or by making an appointment. Students are encouraged to do this early in their academic careers in order to plan for successful completion and take advantage of opportunities such as Honors, special research, internship, service learning, or study abroad opportunities in associate with the major or certificate.

Dr. Corrie Norman is the undergraduate advisor and Honors in the Major advisor. Contact her by email at cenorman@wisc.edu.

Requirements

University General Education Requirements

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext) section of the Guide.

Requirements Detail

**General Education**

- **Breadth—Humanities/Literature/Arts:** 6 credits
- **Breadth—Natural Science:** 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits
- **Breadth—Social Studies:** 3 credits
- **Communication Part A & Part B**
- **Ethnic Studies**
- **Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B**

* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

College of Letters & Science Breadth and Degree Requirements: Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum. View a comparison of the degree requirements here. (https://pubs.wisc.edu/home/archives/ug15/images/babs2009.pdf)

Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements

Requirements Detail

**Mathematics**

Fulfilled with completion of University General Education requirements Quantitative Reasoning a (QR A) and Quantitative Reasoning b (QR B) coursework. Please note that some majors may require students to complete additional math coursework beyond the B.A. mathematics requirement.

**Foreign Language**

- Complete the fourth unit of a foreign language; OR
- Complete the third unit of a foreign language and the second unit of an additional foreign language

Note: A unit is one year of high school work or one semester/term of college work.

**L&S Breadth**

- **Humanities:** 12 credits: 6 of the 12 credits must be in literature
- **Social Sciences:** 12 credits
- **Natural Sciences:** 12 credits: must include one 3+ credit course in the biological sciences; must include one 3+ credit course in the physical sciences

**Liberal Arts and Science Coursework** 108 credits
Depth of work
Intermediate/Advanced work
Major Declare and complete at least one (1) major
Total Credits 120 credits

UW-Madison Experience
30 credits in residence, overall
30 credits in residence after the 90th credit

Minimum GPAs
2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison
2.000 in intermediate/advanced coursework at UW–Madison

NON–L&S STUDENTS PURSING AN L&S MAJOR
Non–L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the major requirements and do not need to complete the L&S breadth and degree requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR
To earn a major in religious studies, students must complete at least 30 credits as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELIG ST 101</td>
<td>Religion in Global Perspective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELIG ST 102</td>
<td>Exploring Religion in Sickness and Health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RELIG ST 103</td>
<td>Exploring Religion and Sexuality</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIG ST 600 &amp; RELIG ST 601</td>
<td>Religion in Critical Perspective and Senior Capstone Research and Colloquium</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Courses:</td>
<td>Select additional credits in RELIG ST to bring credits in the major to 30. At least 9 credits must be at the 300-level or higher.</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Studies course offerings (<a href="http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/relig_st">http://guide.wisc.edu/courses/relig_st</a>)</td>
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Total Credits 30

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK
2.000 GPA in all RELIG ST and major courses
2.000 GPA on 15 upper-level credits for the major, taken in residence
15 credits in RELIG ST or the major, taken on campus


HONORS IN THE MAJOR
Students may declare Honors in the Religious Studies Major in consultation with the Religious Studies undergraduate advisor.

HONORS IN THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR REQUIREMENTS
To earn a B.A. or B.S. with Honors in the Major in Religious Studies students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

- Earn a 3.300 overall university GPA
- Earn a 3.500 GPA for all RELIG ST courses and courses that count for the major
- Complete 19 credits, taken for Honors, with individual grades of B or better, to include:
  - RELIG ST 600 Religion in Critical Perspective
  - RELIG ST 601 Senior Capstone Research and Colloquium
  - 6 credits of intermediate- or advanced-level RELIG ST courses or courses that count for the major
  - A two-semester Senior Honors Thesis in RELIG ST 681 Senior Honors Thesis and RELIG ST 682 Senior Honors Thesis, for a total of 6 credits.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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<tr>
<td>Total Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>To receive a bachelor’s degree from UW–Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.</td>
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</table>

Residency Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

Quality of Work Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Religious Studies curriculum is designed so that, by the time of graduation, students will have developed the following attributes:

1. Proficiency in close reading, interpretation, and written and oral analysis.
2. Proficiency in accessing, appraising, and utilizing a variety of resources and methods for research across disciplinary lines.
3. Proficiency in categorizing, analyzing and comparing diverse systems of value and belief in a variety of contexts.
4. Global and local religious literacy; identifying, evaluating, and interpreting the interrelationships and impact of religious worldviews and communities in Wisconsin, the United States and globally.

5. Ability to conduct and present sustained research on primary sources using methodologies/analysis of religious studies culminating in the senior capstone project.

**ADVISING AND CAREERS**

**ADVISING**

Dr. Corrie Norman is the undergraduate advisor and Honors in the Major advisor. Contact her by email at cenorman@wisc.edu to meet with her. Students are encouraged to meet with Dr. Norman early in their academic careers in order to plan for successful completion and take advantage of opportunities such as Honors, special research, internship, service learning or study abroad opportunities in associate with the major or certificate.

**CAREERS**

Religious studies engages a variety of professional disciplines and provides important preparation for thinking, communicating and functioning professionally in a complex, multi-dimensional world.

Religious studies sponsors workshops and other career exploration vehicles, often in collaboration with Career Services, to aid students in articulating the value of religious studies for their career preparation. Student-developed capstone projects in religious studies often make specific connections to experiential learning and career preparation in a range of fields. Talk with Dr. Norman about possibilities for combining internships and other forms of pre-professional training with the major and certificate.

Letters & Science Career Services (http://careers.ls.wisc.edu/Undergraduate-Advising.htm)

**PEOPLE**


**Associate Professors:** Beneker, Hutton, Livanos, Meulenburg, Rosenblum, Shelef, Shoemaker, Thal, Todorovic

**Assistant Professors:** Al-Mohammad, Chamedes, Hollander, Mandell, Pruitt

**Visiting Assistant Professors:** Cerulli, Ridgely

**Distinguished Faculty Associate:** Brown

**Faculty Associates:** Mellor, Norman

**Associate Faculty Associates:** Rosenhagen, Whelan

**Lecturer:** Carlsson

**Faculty Diversity Liaison:** Program Director Rosenblum